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ISRAELI SETTLERS ATTACK ONE OF THE OLDEST CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN PALESTINE

by James Rushmore | Jul 9, 2025

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Churches in Palestine

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Israeli settlers attacked the West Bank town of Taybeh on Monday, causing extensive damage to a fifth-century church and a cemetery. The vandals started a series of fires near the ancient Church of Saint George, one of the oldest Christian churches in Palestine. Local residents were able to extinguish the fires. The attack marks the latest effort by Israeli settlers to intimidate the Palestinian inhabitants of Taybeh, which is the only remaining village in the territory with an exclusively Christian population.

The attack prompted three local priests to issue a statement. Fathers Daoud Khoury, Jack-Noble Abed, and Bashar Fawadleh called upon “local and international actors” to launch an investigation into the settler attacks, put pressure on Israeli authorities, and send delegations directly to Taybeh. They also urged people to provide the villagers with economic and legal assistance. Munther Isaac, a Palestinian pastor who was interviewed by Tucker Carlson in April 2024, shared the priests’ appeal

on X. He also criticized U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee, a Christian Zionist, for pursuing policies that enable settler violence in the West Bank.

Huckabee toured the West Bank last week. During his visit, he expressed his support for the settler movement and referred to the territory as “Judea and Samaria,” saying that it would be “a historical injustice and a denial of the Bible” to use any other terminology. He also said that the settlers “represent God’s presence and His choice of this land.”

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Huckabee’s trip came days after every Likud minister in the Israeli government sent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a letter urging him to annex the West Bank before the end of the Knesset’s summer session on July 27. The letter argues that the “strategic partnership, backing, and support of the U.S. and President Donald Trump have made it a propitious time to move forward with [the annexation] now, and ensure Israel’s security for generations.” It also said that a Palestinian state would represent an “existential danger to Israel.”

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The attacks mark the latest assault on Taybeh. In June, settlers built an outpost on the eastern edge of the village, atop a key agricultural zone that’s home to thousands of Palestinian olive trees. Local farmers were denied access to the area, and settlers attacked residents who tried to enter the zone. The Israeli settlers have also been allowing their livestock to graze on Palestinian farmlands as part of an effort to push the villagers out.

At least 1,000 Palestinians, including over 200 children, have been killed in the West Bank since Israel began its genocide in the Gaza Strip. In addition to raiding refugee camps and displacing thousands of native civilians, IDF forces have provided settlers with semi-automatic weapons. In 2024, Israel seized control of more Palestinian land in the West Bank than in the previous 20 years combined.

James Rushmore

James Rushmore is a writer whose interests include civil liberties, foreign policy, and national security. His work has previously appeared in Racket News, where he worked with Matt Taibbi on the FOIA Files.

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